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CONTACT: Jacob Roche 202-225-4031

**HENDERSON, LA** - Today, Congressman Charlie Melancon joined USDA Rural Development's State Director Clyde C. Holloway in presenting a USDA Rural Development grant to the Town of Henderson. The \$14,300 grant is for the purchase of a new police car.

**"Our local law enforcement officers must have the tools they need to keep our communities safe," said Melancon. "This is a priority for me in Congress, where I have advocated for programs to help local governments protect our citizens from crime, provide assistance to victims and bring communities together through community policing."**

As a member of the Rural Caucus in the US House of Representatives, Congressman Melancon has highlighted the growing methamphetamine epidemic in rural communities and focused on ways to increase law enforcement, develop strategies for environmental cleanup of meth labs, and provide social services for families who have been devastated by meth abuse. To that end, the Rural Caucus has urged the Bush Administration to focus on rural law enforcement in the National Drug Control Strategy. As a member of the Science Committee, Congressman Melancon supported legislation that would provide for an environmental protocol for cleaning up meth labs. The dangers of meth continue long after the labs have been shut down because of toxins that can continue to be a hazard for families that live in areas that were once used to produce the drug.

Congressman Melancon has also been a strong supporter of the Crime Victims Fund which enables local communities to assist victims of domestic abuse, child physical and sexual abuse, drunk driving, sexual assault, elder abuse, robbery, assault, and homicide. This fund also provides for crisis intervention programs and counseling, support groups, shelters, and emergency financial assistance for victims of crime.

In addition, Congressman Melancon has given support to the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. On several occasions, he urged that the COPS program be fully funded, and he resisted proposed cuts to funding in the program. The COPS program has helped local communities hire law enforcement for the prevention of gang violence and drug

crimes and to help improve communication interoperability for local first responders.

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